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of Veterans Affairs

SSVF Emergency Housing Assistance: A Lookback and Review

July 8, 2021

[Link to Audio](#)



WEBINAR FORMAT

- Webinar will last approximately 1.5 hour
- Participants' phone connections are “muted” due to the high number of callers
- Questions can also be submitted anytime to [SSVF@va.gov](mailto:ssvf@va.gov)



AGENDA

- Welcome
- Introduction and Updates
- Overview of SSVF's EHA Crisis Response
- Local Implications of EHA Crisis Response
- EHA Data Collection and Lookback
- Veterans Services of the Carolinas (ABCCM)
- Tampa Crossroads (Veterans Assistance Center)
- Current State of EHA
- EHA & Beyond the Pandemic



John Kuhn LCSW, MPH National Director, SSVF

Introduction and Updates



The SSVF Program Office
thanks you for the hard work
and dedication to serving our
homeless Veterans!



EHA LESSONS LEARNED

- Valuable to engage those reluctant to enter shelters and transitional housing
- Always has been a tool to keep families together
- Able to use for individuals when “appropriate” shelter or transitional housing unavailable.

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Overview of SSVF's Emergency Housing Crisis Response



OVERVIEW OF EHA CRISIS RESPONSE

- March, 2020
 - Declaration of Stafford Act
 - Expanded use of Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA) to assist in crisis response
 - SSVF Providers shifted focus of work quickly and strategically
 - Technical Assistance Focus and assistance



OVERVIEW OF EHA CRISIS RESPONSE

May 7, 2020

- Initial written guidance released by SSVF Program Office
- Series of webinars
- Referral forms

Emergency Housing Assistance Guidance May 7, 2020

1. Under 38 CFR Part 62.34, the SSVF Program can place homeless Veteran households in emergency housing (hotels and motels) for up to 45 days pending placement into permanent housing. This limit has been suspended by the Stafford Act for the duration of the disaster declarations made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (currently declarations have been made in all 50 states). The 72-hour limit for individuals is also suspended.
2. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, SSVF grantees are now allowed to offer emergency housing placements even if other temporary housing options are available if those options would place high-risk Veterans into congregate living environments. High-risk Veterans would include those Veterans over the age of 60 and/or Veterans with significant underlying health problems, particularly those identified by the CDC as being at increased risk from COVID-19.
3. Additionally, unsheltered Veterans and asymptomatic Veterans in need of quarantine should be prioritized for emergency housing placement should capacity exist after high-risk placements have been made.
4. It is important to note that such temporary housing placements are only available to homeless Veteran households eligible to be enrolled in SSVF and information on provided services must be captured in HMIS.
5. Veterans who are symptomatic with COVID-19 should not be referred for these emergency housing placements as SSVF grantees do not have the capacity to place and adequately monitor such patients. Exceptions can be made when local governments have established housing options, such as dedicated hotel space, for those testing positive to COVID-19.
6. It is critical that SSVF grantees actively engage VA Medical Centers and other community-based health care providers to ensure appropriate medical supports exist for those placed.
7. Should you have additional questions, please contact your Regional Coordinator or the SSVF Program Office by email at ssvf@va.gov.

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Local Implications of EHA Crisis Response



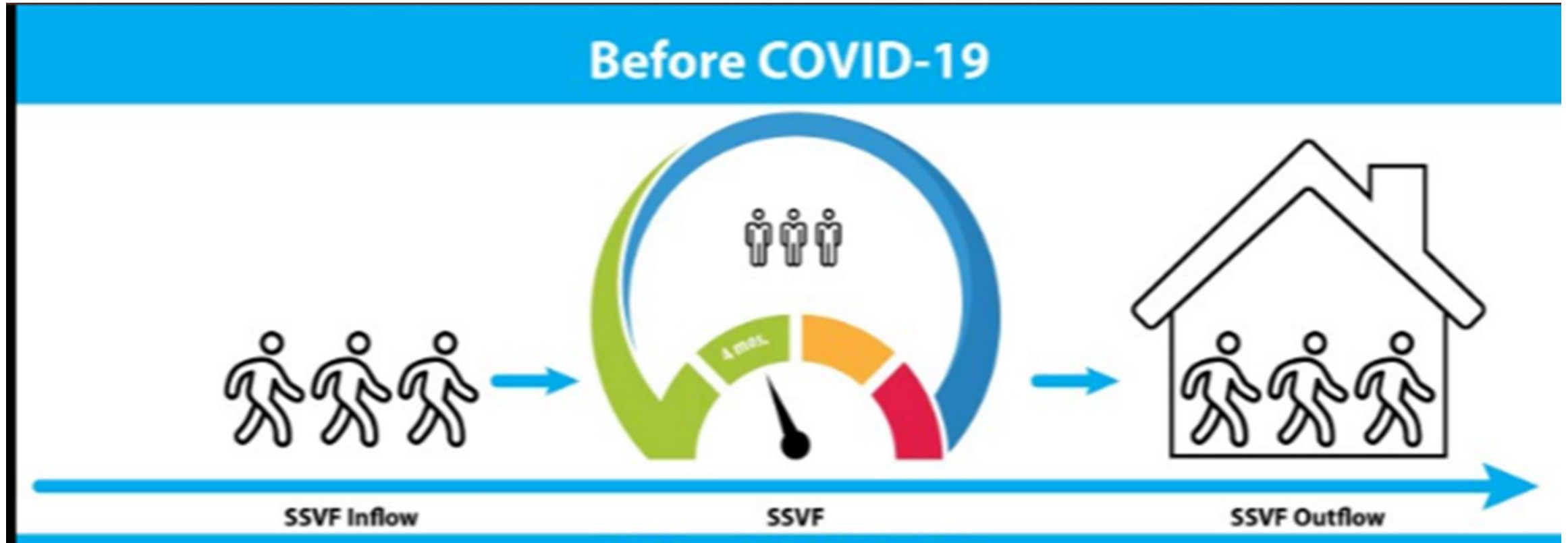
LOCAL IMPLICATIONS OF EHA CRISIS RESPONSE

Local Happenings

- Environmental/Interpersonal
 - Local & State pandemic requirements
 - Local demonstration impacts
 - Staffing implications
- Access to Necessities
 - Food & Shelter
 - Childcare
 - Transportation
- Access to Work Necessities
 - Equipment
 - Agencies to receive referrals
 - Hotels willing to accept participants
 - Financial supports
 - Transportation for participants

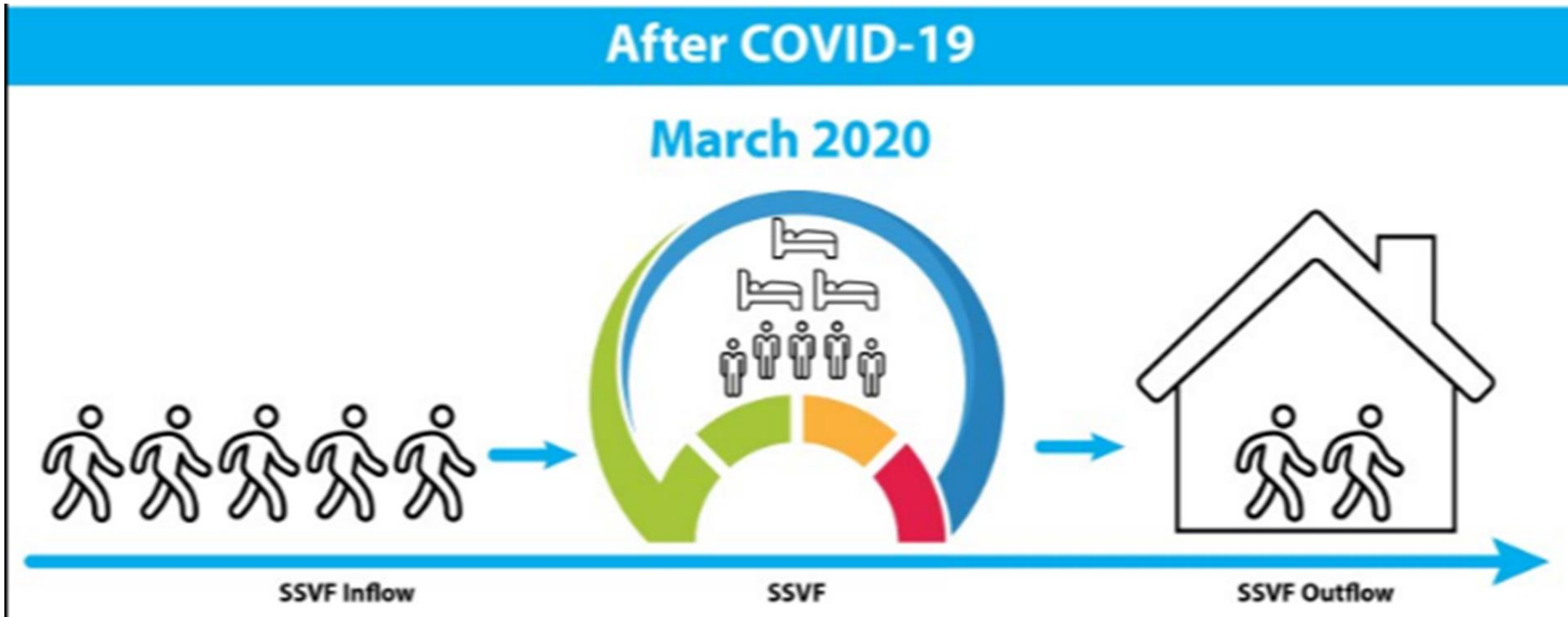


LOCAL IMPLICATIONS OF EHA CRISIS RESPONSE





LOCAL IMPLICATIONS OF EHA CRISIS RESPONSE



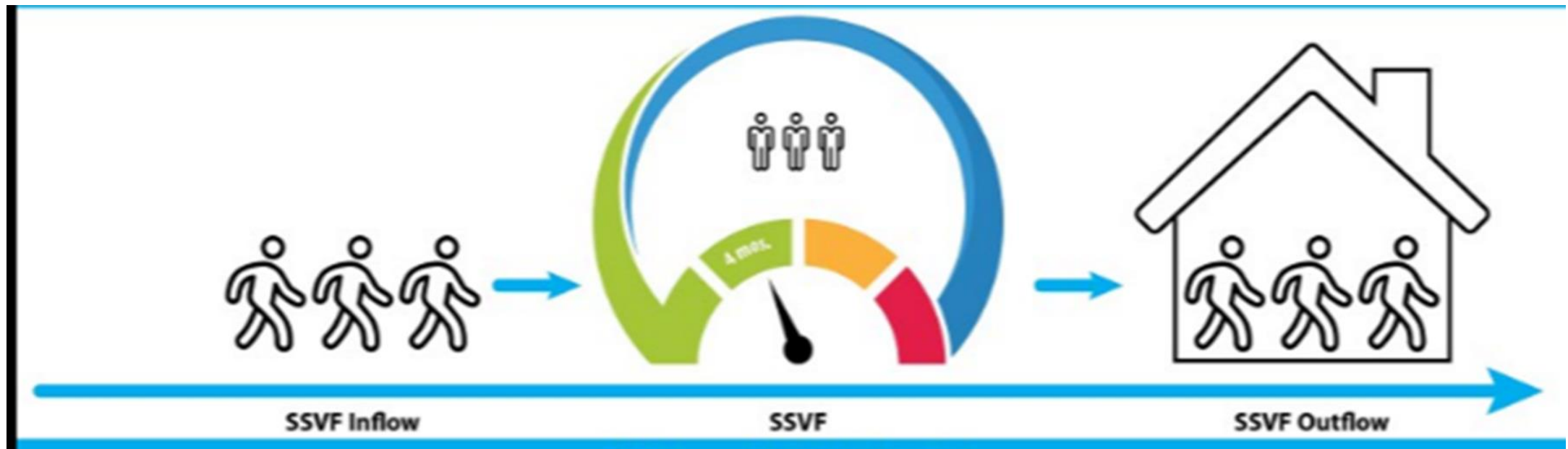


LOCAL IMPLICATIONS OF EHA CRISIS RESPONSE





STRIVING TO ACHIEVE **BETTER** THAN PRE-COVID CONDITIONS



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EHA Data Collection and Lookback



**The past is where you learned
the lesson. The future is where
you apply the lesson Don't give up
in the middle!**

Dale Carnegie



EHA DATA COLLECTION AND LOOKBACK

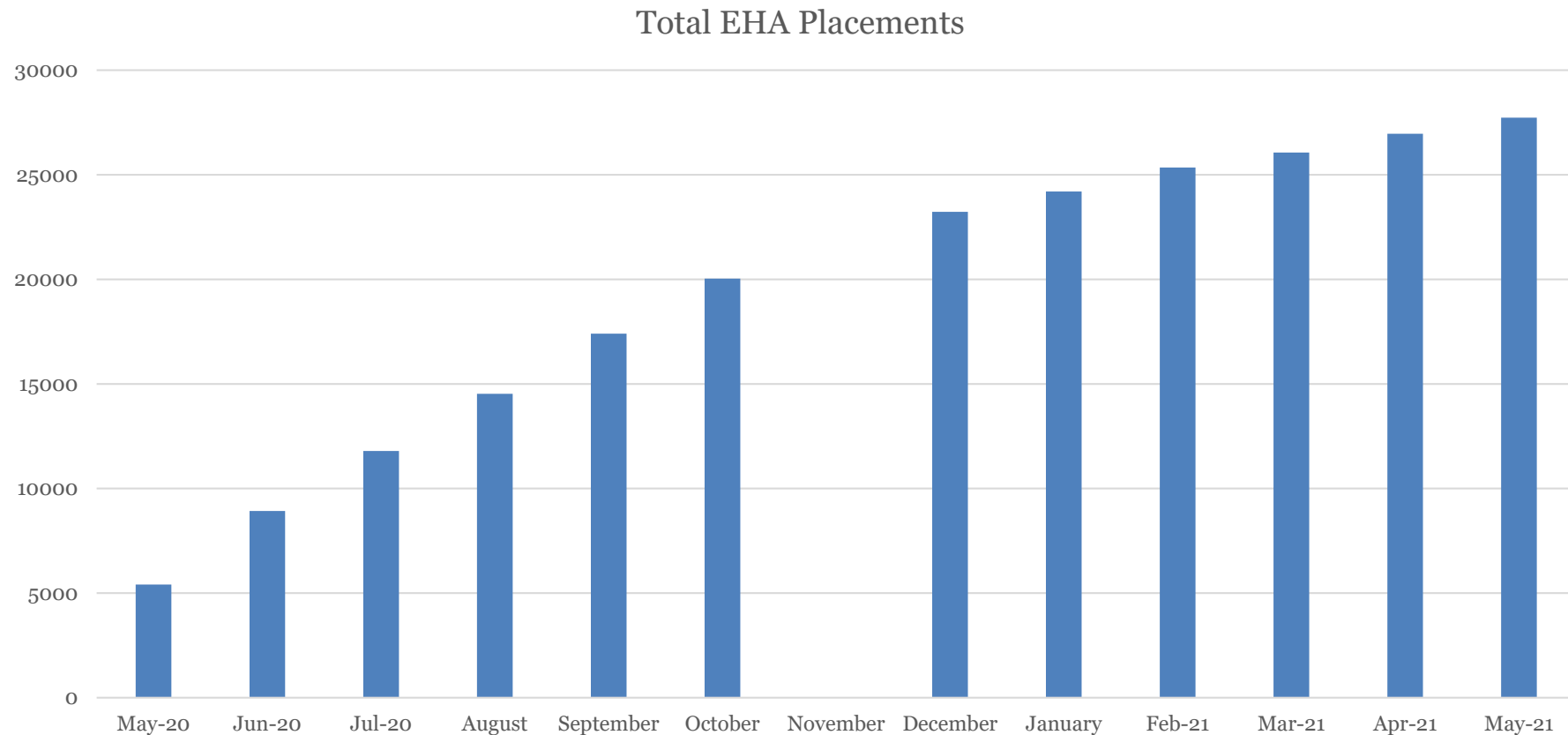
Spreadsheet sent to RC:

FY 2020 COVID-19 Emergency Housing Assistance Referrals and Placements							
Grant Number							
Agency Name							
Referral Date	VAMC	Referring VA Program	Veteran Number	Dispositon: Placed	Date Placed	Estimated Cost	Comments
				Y/N/PENDING			
			Veteran #1				
			Veteran #2				

May EHA Survey Monkey:
5409 Total Veterans in EHA



Emergency Housing Placements May 2020 to May 2021





EHA DATA COLLECTION AND LOOKBACK

Since the COVID-19 crisis hit, more landlords have been requiring income for applicants to be approved for housing units. We have hired two housing navigators throughout the state of Colorado to try and overcome this barrier and build relationships with landlords to accept Veterans into housing with a variety of backgrounds, income, and individual situations

We have increased our housing search to weekly in an effort to expedite the transition from hotel/motel to permanent housing.

- Some of the hotels have asked program participants to leave because of theft, drug use, inappropriate guests/parties, disturbances, prostitution, domestic violence, and fighting. Some veterans have left the hotel without contacting SSVF staff leaving personal items in the rooms.

Because the number of veterans, combined with their length of stay, in EHA fluctuates, it is difficult to do budget forecasting.

Face to Face meetings with hotel management to enhance our relationship and provide support as needed. Communication with community partners to attempt dual enrollment where possible and to place wrap around services for our veterans. Partnering with Vash- meetings every week. Low barrier GPD/GPD-consistent meetings between Columbia Care and SSVF Director.



Barriers

- Damages/Behaviors
- Housing Stock
- Staffing locally
- Lack of funding
- Hotel Capacity
- Billing issues
- Transportation
- Lack of coordination

Creative Solutions

- Master leases
- Enhanced by name list meetings
- Bringing services to the hotel
- Creative landlord engagement
- Virtual methods of communication



Response

- Increased technical assistance efforts
- Increased support from Regional Coordinators
- Reintroduction and refresher of Coordinated Entry
- Collaboration with HUD-VASH
- Reduce inflow by utilizing available capacity offered through GPD and HCHV CRS
- Reverting back towards utilizing EHA only if capacity is not available, or to meet unique needs of the Veteran Household.



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Veterans Services of the Carolinas (Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministries)

Brandon Wilson, Director

Jessica Rice, Assistant Director of Housing

VETERANS

SERVICES OF THE CAROLINAS



Emergency Housing Assistance

Brandon Wilson- Director

Jessica Rice – Assistant Director of Housing

Mr. Coffee from EHA to PH

November 2020:
Income Increase VA
SCD and SSVF
Discharge



February 2020: Initial
Engagement with the
intake team



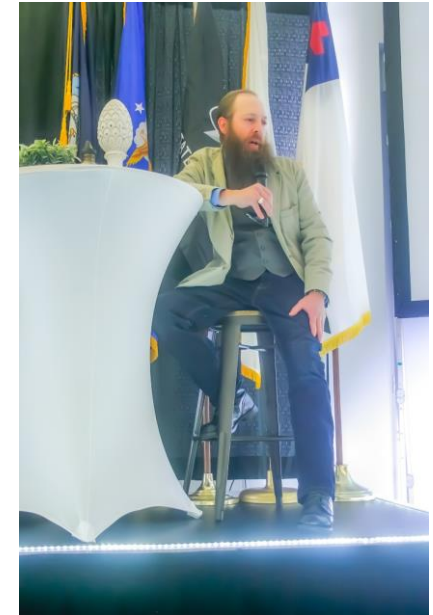
May 2020: SSVF
Enrollment and EHA
placement



June 2020: Moved
into Permanent
Housing



August 2020:
Enrolled in
Employment
Program HVRP



Emergency Housing Assistance

EHA Coordination



“...having Stephen around the property during a difficult time was prudent for our hotel. Not only to better himself but to assist in maintaining the security and protection of the property was extremely important to us. The hotel may not be around today if not for the support with VSC during the pandemic and the veterans who stayed at the hotel. We are very appreciative of everything that VSC has done and what the veterans were able to bring to the Super 6...”

-Pratik Shah/Best Western and (was Super 6 now Days Inn) Owner Waynesville



Emergency Housing Assistance

Back to the Basics

Case Mangers
*Pre-Pandemic vs Pandemic

Safe Shelter Options

Advice from Legal Partners

Subsidy Utilization



Returning Home

Short-term EHA stays

Income Support

Face to Face interactions



Emergency Housing Assistance



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Tampa Crossroads (Veterans Assistance Center)

Andrea Taylor-Machin, Program Manager



EHA Successes and Collaboration

In The Beginning.....

- Outreach was instrumental in locating veterans experiencing homelessness and checking for “traditional” shelter bed availability.
 - If no “traditional” shelter beds were available, a heightened sense of urgency between Outreach, Intake and Finance, to get the eligible veteran enrolled, check on hotel room availability, if hotel room was available, provide transportation to hotel for check-in.
 - We utilized local law enforcement to transport clients to the hotel if no other options of transportation were available.
- Early coordination with our VASH partners expanded naturally due to well-established partnership created years ago
- Barriers: communicating the expectations of respecting the hotel premises, their room and other hotel guest.
 - Created a Hotel Program Agreement
 - Dedicated EHA CM

The Impacts

- \$338,830 TFA Used for EHA from March 2020 – May 2021
- 90 + veterans that would have been on the street, and vulnerable to contracting Covid-19

WHAT WORKED?

- Bi-Weekly partnership conference calls with VA Leadership and SSVF reviewing, overall challenges, successes and number of co-enrolled clients in EHA
- Weekly partnership calls with SSVF staff attending the VA huddles, discussed in-depth, co-enrolled clients, specific housing challenges and next steps.
 - Participants include from SSVF: Lead CM and CMs , from VA: VASH Supervisor and VASH CM's
- Effective team collaboration and coordination between Outreach, Intake, Finance, Project Admin and EHA Case Manager

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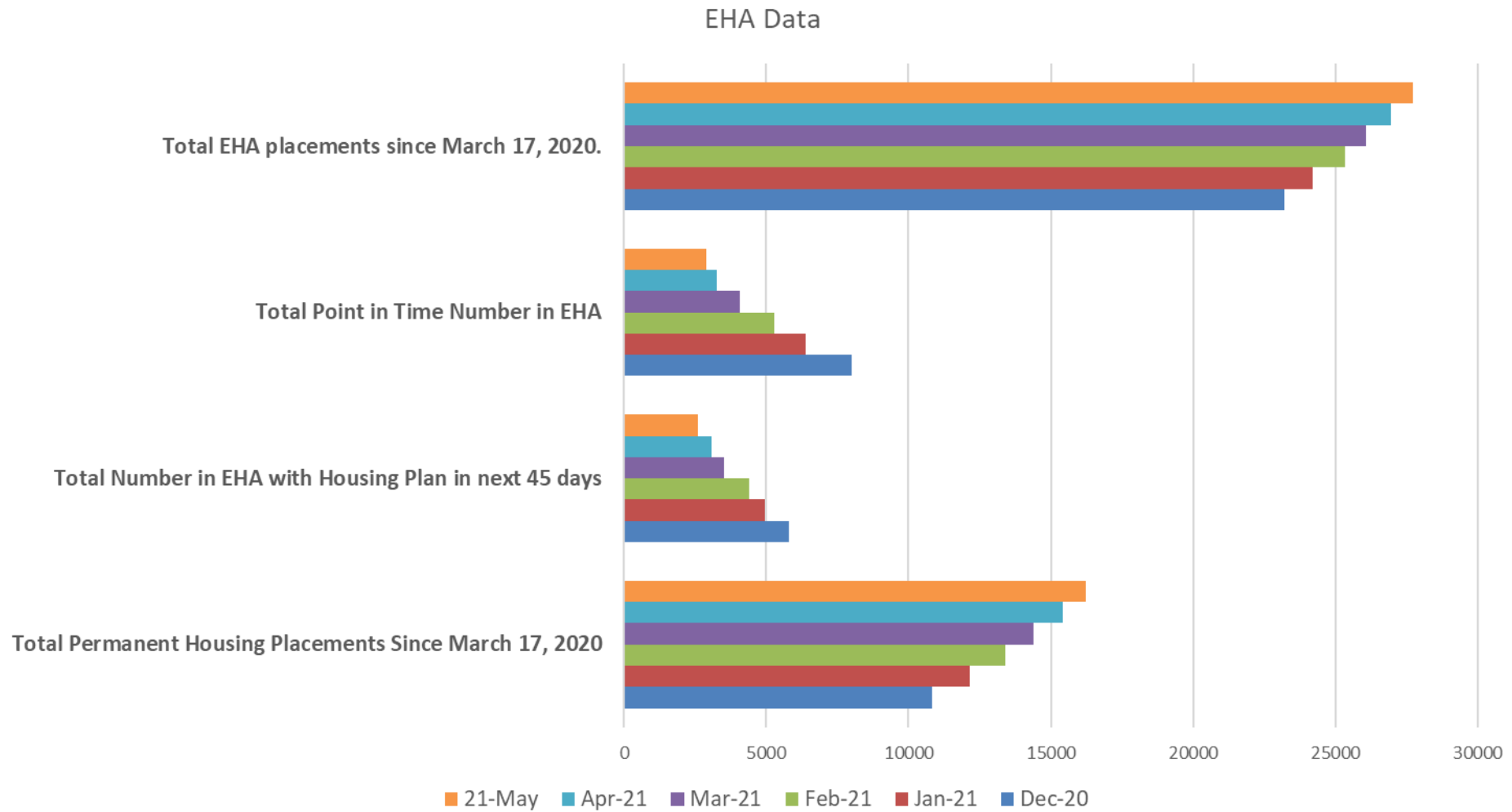


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Current State of EHA



CURRENT STATE OF EHA





Why the downward trend?

- Use of GPD and HCHV Safely
- Prioritizing Veterans for EHA
- Collaboration with HUD-VASH and other community partners
- TA
- Creative practices

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EHA & Beyond the Pandemic



Post Pandemic The Ending of Stafford Act Allowances

- Grantees will have 90 days to transition to pre-COVID operations.
 - Rapid Resolution Services
 - Emergency Housing Assistance Services
 - Shallow Subsidy Services
 - Shared Housing
 - Coordination with the VAMC Homeless Programs and Community Partners



Emergency Housing Assistance

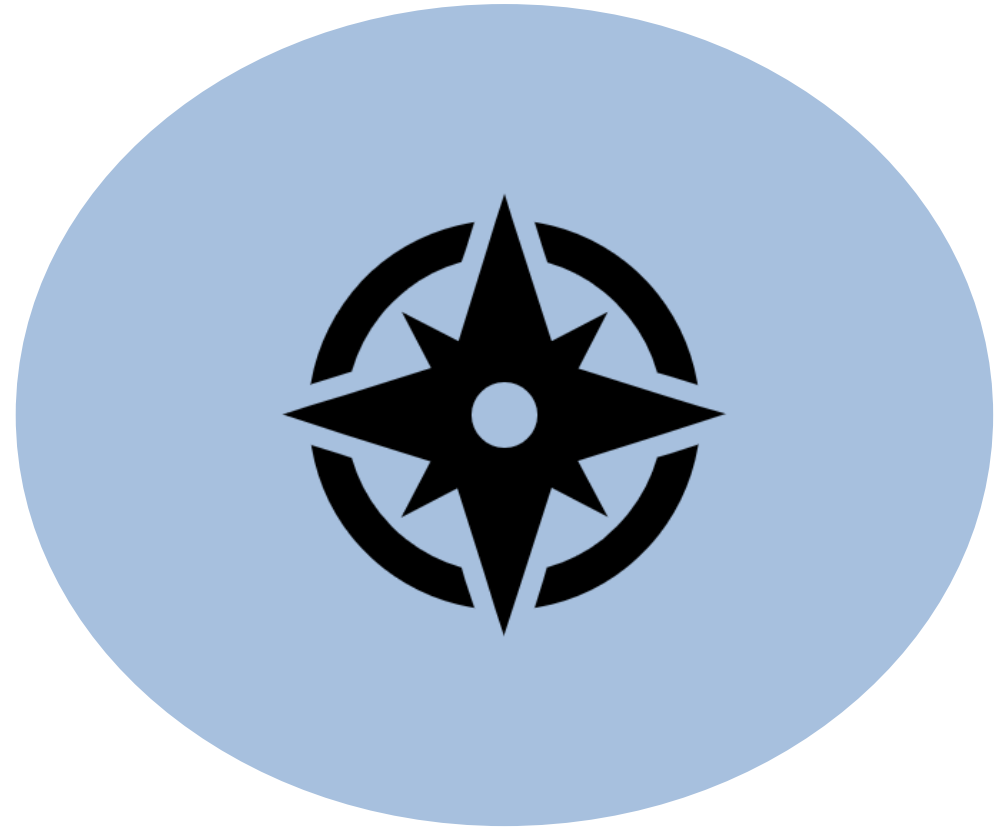
Grantees will continue to provide EHA assistance as needed

- Veteran households with dependents will continue to be able to offer EHA as a temporary option to ensure household safety in the case where shelter beds, transitional housing or other resources are not available. This can often be the only option to keep families together.
- Single Veteran Households will continue to be able to offer EHA as a temporary option under these same circumstances with some additional considerations on a case-by-case basis



Finding True North

Rapid ReHousing &
Homeless Prevention





Rapid ReHousing & Homeless Prevention

- Reorient yourself with the SSVF Program Guide
- Reorient yourself with your current SSVF MOA
- Be deliberate with reorienting your staff to pre-COVID operations
- If you joined SSVF after COVID began, use the opportunity to learn and relearn Program Operations with your staff
- Make sure any subcontractors are also oriented to the return to pre-COVID operations
- If you have made any short-term or long-term operational changes locally, you need to make sure staff are clear about the longevity of those changes.
 - Do you need to update your policies and procedures?
 - Are there changes that were intended to be temporary but are good for service delivery and should remain in place i.e., staffing plans, remote work, rapid response protocols with fiscal processing, etc.
- Utilize your Regional Coordinator as a resource and sounding board



QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION